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Determinanten van de gemeentelijke herindelingen in Nederland na 1960. Een statistische analyse met indicaties voor de uitvoering van het beleid

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SUMMARY

DETERMINANTS OF MUNICIPAL REDIVISIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS AFTER 1960

A statistical analysis with indications for the effectuation of policies

The term 'municipal redivision'¹ is used to indicate a complete revision of the boundaries between municipalities in an area containing roughly 10 to 30 municipalities. On such an occasion some of the existing municipalities are abolished and others are maintained. The former are added to or distributed over the latter. Other boundary corrections may also be introduced. Sometimes parts of abolished, or even of maintained, municipalities are amalgamated into new units.

The investigation described in this book is concerned with the following questions (Chapter 1).

- a. Is it possible to determine empirical laws governing past redivisions, which laws can be formulated quantitatively? Do such laws apply to municipalities in a given redivision area only or are they valid for each of the 10 redivisions in the Netherlands that have been examined?
- b. Is it possible to determine the main factors which have influenced the redivision decisions that were taken with respect to the municipalities involved? Possible factors to be considered are the size or density of the population of the municipality, the distance of the municipality to certain towns or cities, socio-economic influences, historical influences, the relative number of commuters living in the municipality, its surface area, the length of a common boundary with a neighbouring municipality and the relative number of inhabitants cherishing certain political or religious convictions.
- c. Can the size of the influence of each of these factors on the final result of the redivision be approximated, or can an estimate be given of the order of sequence of these factors according to the degree to which they have contributed to the redivision decisions taken by the national authorities?

1. English literature does not contain an expression which is equivalent to the concept of 'gemeentelijke herindeling' in Dutch (or 'Neugliederung der Gemeinden' in German).

d. Supposing that the above questions can be answered in the affirmative, is it possible by using the knowledge obtained and the methods developed, in future cases to formulate recommendations concerning decisions to be taken that are based on certain *desired* quantitative influences of a number of relevant factors? Can a new redivision plan for municipalities be worked out for given postulated and quantitatively expressed criteria? Similarly, can a recommendation be given with respect to the optimal choice between a number of available redivision plans?

e. Is it feasible to forecast the outcome of future redivisions?

Chapter 2 contains a short reconnaissance of the field of investigation and includes some remarks on the origin and the task of municipalities and on the enlarged scale of various municipal activities, and its consequences. The motives, the active forces and the character of proposals to change municipal boundaries are discussed and the legal procedure of a municipal redivision is described.

Chapter 3 states the formal problem and the purpose of the investigation. A number of concepts is defined and explained. Possible active forces in the redivision process are further specified. A model of such a process is presented.

The statistical analysis is carried out in Chapter 4. The forces acting on the redivision process are expressed quantitatively.

Chapter 5 presents a description of the outcomes of the research carried out and specifies the inferences to be drawn. For each area investigated an overall picture is given of the main determining factors and of their estimated influences.

Chapter 6 contains an exposition of the way in which the obtained results and the method of analysis developed can be put to use in working out future redivisions. A discussion is presented of the manner of determining an optimal choice between various existing redivision plans for a given area. Finally, attention is given to methods of forecasting the results of future redivisions.

Chapter 7 summarizes the conclusions. These are as follows.

1. Three types of partial decision can be distinguished in the framework of a redivision process: I. concerning the abolition or the maintenance of each municipality; II. concerning the allocation of abolished municipalities (or parts thereof) to maintained municipalities and III. referring to the amalgamation of abolished municipalities (or parts thereof) into new municipalities. With the aid of regression techniques each partial decision can be satisfactorily related to a number of 'explanatory factors'.

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2. Each partial decision taken for a given area can be 'explained' by a combination of not more than 5 factors from a total of 9. Four to eight of these factors are active in any single redivision area.
3. These nine explanatory factors are quantitative expressions of the characteristics of the municipalities mentioned under b. above.
4. For Partial Decision I the main determining factor is the 'historical importance' of the municipality. The explanatory factors carrying most weight for Partial Decision II are the distance and the surface factors. For Partial Decision III, the 'economic importance' and the population of the municipality should be specially mentioned.
5. It is not possible to obtain a reasonable *general* 'explanation' of all 10 redvisions in the Netherlands taken as a whole (comprising more than 170 municipalities). For each of the 10 areas studied, a (sometimes slightly) different set of determining factors is found.
6. On statistical grounds sufficient confidence can be accorded to the results of the investigation.
7. For various alternative redivision plans the inherent quantitative influences of the decisive factors can be ascertained. On the basis of these, the decision maker can determine his preference.
8. The method of analysis used enables research workers and government officials to work out solutions for future partial decisions, where certain factors should exert given desired quantitative influences on the outcome of the redivision process.
9. On the basis of two forecasting methods which are developed, rather accurate predictions can be made concerning the abolition or maintenance of municipalities in the event of a redivision. In the cases tested, viz. the redvisions of the Western Betuwe, of the Land of Heusden and Altena and of Zealand Flanders, these two methods respectively forecast 95% and 84% of the abolitions and maintenances correctly.

A number of technical appendices and tables containing the basic statistics used, are added.